

**REMARKS**

Claims 3 through 16 and 19 through 23 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 17 and 18 are canceled by the present amendment, and claims 19 through 23 are newly added.

Applicants note with appreciation that in section 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 3, 9 and 14 through 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have rewritten claims 3, 9, 14 and 15 as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 16 depends from claim 15, and as such, claim 16 does not need to be rewritten. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3, 9 and 14 through 15 are now in condition for allowance.

In section 1 of the Office Action, claim 7 is objected to because of an informality regarding its dependency. Applicants amended claim 7 to correct its dependency. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully solicited.

In section 3 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Claims 1, 2, 17 and 18 are canceled. Claims 5, 6 and 8 depend from claim 3, and claims 10 and 13 depend from claim 9. Whereas claims 3 and 9 are in condition for allowance, claims 5, 6, 8, 10 and 13 are also in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 17 and 18.

In section 5 of the Office Action, claims 4 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), and in section 6 of the Office Action, claims 11 and 12 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Claims 4, 7 and 12 depend from claim 3, and claim 11 depends from claim 9. Whereas claims 3 and 9 are in condition for allowance, claims 4, 7, 11 and 12 are also in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejections of claims 4, 7, 11 and 12.

Claims 3, 9, 14 and 15 are amended to include recitals of claims from which they previously depended. Claims 4 through 8, and 10 through 13 are amended for consistency with the claims from which they depend. Applicants respectfully submit that none of the amendments is intended to limit the scope of any term of any of the claims, and as such, the Doctrine of Equivalents should be available for all of the terms of all of the claims.

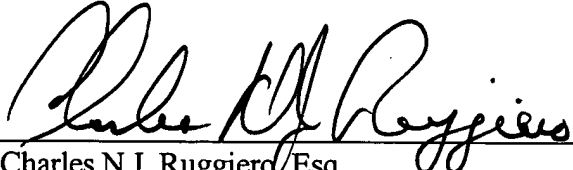
Applicants added claims 19 through 23 to even further provide the claim coverage that Applicants appear to deserve based on the prior art that was cited by the Examiner. A favorable consideration that also results in the allowance of claims 19 through 23 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants are also submitting herewith a proposed set of formal drawings. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner approve the drawings.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims presented in this application patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

February 23, 2004  
Date

  
Charles N.J. Ruggiero, Esq.  
Reg. No. 28,468  
Attorney for the Applicants  
Ohlandt, Greeley, Ruggiero & Perle, L.L.P.  
One Landmark Square, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Stamford, CT 06901-2682  
Tel: 203-327-4500  
Fax: 203-327-6401